

# Descriptions of two new species of *Poecilmitis* Butler (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae)

by

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Yellowwoods, Balgowan

*Poecilmitis psyche* spec. nov., pl. 1, figs. 1, 2, 5 and 6.

♂-HOLOTYPE: Forewing, upperside: whitish basal blue covers the whole forewing except the apex, where it reaches the proximal edge of three confluent post-discal black spots in areas 4,5 and 6. Between these spots and a broad black hindmarginal border, there is a narrow orange band, broken by dark veins. The orange extends to area 3, where the black spot is partially obscured by the basal blue. The hindmarginal border tapers to a point between the end of vein 2 and the anal angle.

*Hindwing*: base is dark blue showing through pale iridescent blue which extends almost to the narrow dark hindmarginal border, covering the usual irregular small black post-discal spots in areas 2 to 5. The bright orange area is broad. The border tapers to an end on vein 2, but there are a few black scales at the end of the anal projection.

*Underside, forewing*: is paler orange with apex and hindmargin buff coloured. All the usual *thysbe* spots are black and very distinct, those towards the costa being centred with shiny gold. The hindmarginal buff is separated from the orange ground colour by a faint brown line. *Hindwing*: reddish-buff with the usual *thysbe* striae and marks showing feebly.

♀-ALLOTYPE: the basal blue is reduced in both wings; cilia lighter brown and distinctly interrupted by internervular whitish-brown.

*Upperside, forewing*: Hindmarginal dark brown border is of even width. The discocellular spot is distinct with a small black spot above it in area 9. The six postdiscal spots are large with the upper three confluent and those in 1b and 3 nearer the base than the large crescent one in 2. *Hindwing*: a faint narrow discocellular streak at the outer edge of basal blue. The six postdiscal black spots are clear, with those in 2 and 4 crescent shaped and much nearer the hindmargin than the others. *Underside*: paler than male in buff areas of both wings, but the spots and other markings are similar.

There is considerable variation in the paratypes. One male shows no orange at all on the upperside of the forewing. The cilia in some males shows traces of the whitish interruptions of the allotype. The hindwing upperside spots are often faint and sometimes missing, and the border is broken up into spots.

Dr Austin Roberts took a male near Klaver (C. P.), 19.IX.1917; and Mr Norman Brauer caught a pair also near Klaver in October 1937; but it is only during the last ten years that other collectors have found this form to be constant. A close examination of a long series has convinced me that it deserves specific rank.

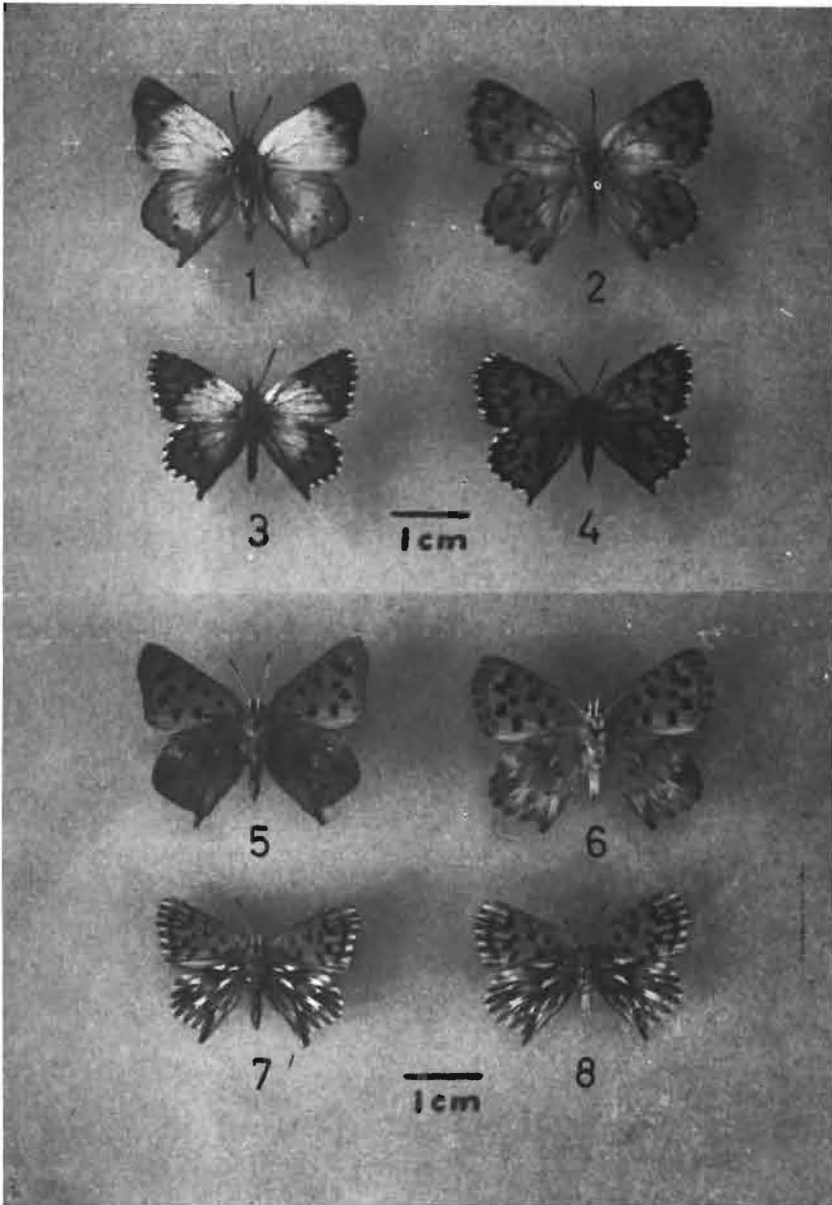
**DISTRIBUTION:** Bitterfontein (C. P.), 23.IX. 1956, C. B. Cottrell, ♂-holotype; idem, 8.X.1954, G. van Son, ♀-allotype; both in Transvaal Museum collection; paratypes: idem, six ♂♂, one ♀, C. B. Cottrell; idem, one ♂, G. van Son; Klaver, 19.IX.1917, A. Roberts; idem, 8.X.1954 two ♂♂, R. Badham; idem, 6.X.1937, N. Brauer; Bitterfontein, 9.IX.1954, two ♂♂, D. A. Swane-poel, and idem, twelve ♂♂ and one ♀, 7.IX.1964, K. M. Pennington. It is probable that this brilliant species will be found on many other koppies in this arid area.

***Poecilmitis braueri* spec. nov.**, pl. 1, figs. 3, 4, 7 and 8.

♂-HOLOTYPE: *Upperside*: ground colour is orange-red with basal areas of both wings silvery-blue; cilia white with broad black interruptions on veins. *Forewing*: shiny blue covers the base to a line from halfway on costa to the point where vein 2 enters the hind-marginal border, which is evenly broad and black. The costa is black from the end of the basal blue with two white streaks near the apex. The veins are thinly black across the orange area. The post-discal spots in areas 4, 5 and 6 are confluent with the one in 5 nearer the base; those in areas 2 and 3 touch the blue. The termen is very obliquely angled on vein 4. The black discocellular spot is somewhat obscured by the blue. *Hindwing*: the basal blue is outwardly bordered by a very irregular W-shaped black line, formed by the confluence of the discal spots usual in the *P. thysbe* L-group, thus reducing the orange band. The black hindmarginal border is narrower than in the forewing, and tapers to a point at the anal angle, which is extended to form a tail. *Underside, forewing*: light orange with the usual black spots, those along costa and in cell with their centres bright metallic greenish-blue. The apex and submarginal area are light buff, bordered proximally by a black line, which has dark rays inwardly and dark buff outwardly along veins. There are whitish streaks between the veins in the submarginal area. *Hindwing*: reddish-brown with the usual striae and marks silvery-white. The margin shows internervular whitish streaks.

♀-ALLOTYPE: *Upperside*: has a ground colour of paler orange than the male, but the cilia and hindmarginal borders of both wings are the same. *Forewing*: the blue is much darker, less shiny and restricted to the base; the discocellular spot is large and quadrate, and there is a small black spot in the middle of the cell on the outer edge of the blue. *Hindwing*: the basal blue is reduced and extends only to a straight line from the middle of the costa to a point on the inner margin 3 mm from the anal angle; the discal spots are smaller than those of the forewing; both wings have the veins thinly blacked across the orange areas. *Underside*: similar to male.

PLATE 1.



Figs. 1-2 and 5-6. *Poecilmitis psyche* spec. nov. 1. Male and 2. female, upperside; 5. male and 6. female, underside.

Figs. 3-4 and 7-8. *P. braueri* spec. nov. 3. Male and 4. female, upperside; 7. male and 8. female, underside.

The paratypes show some variation, mainly in the intensity of the discal spots in both wings. Several males have them separate in the hindwing without any suggestion of the characteristic W-shaped line of the type.

This very distinct species was discovered in 1958 by my friend, Mr Norman Brauer on Madeira Hill near Queenstown (C. P.) at a considerable elevation. It has since been found by Mr Clive Quickelberge and Mr Cameron McMaster to inhabit several mountains in the Stutterheim area, such as Mt. Kubusi and the Dontsa Pass on the road to Keiskama Hoek. Here they are sometimes abundant at altitudes of 3000' to 3500' on the grassy slopes from August to November. There is also a late summer brood.

DISTRIBUTION: Madeira Hill (Queenstown Dist., C. P.) 23.III.1962, ♂-holo- and ♀-allotype in Transvaal Museum collection; idem, four ♂- and one ♀-paratypes, 23.III.1962; and two ♂-paratypes, 13.XI.1962, Stutterheim (C. P.), all in my collection.